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HUMANITY

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***More Than Any Child Should Know:  
A Kindertransport Story of the Holocaust***

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**Writing Prompts | Discussion Questions | Potential Culminating Activities**



**Writing Prompts and Discussion Questions**

**The following may be used as discussion questions or as writing prompts.**

1. Consider Steve's quote that appears before the story begins: *"In a sense, nothing happened to me -- I escaped. But, in truth, the events of the first 10 years of my life have shaped me. Even I, lucky as I was, knew more separation, loneliness, insecurity, anxiety, fear, and loss than any child should know."*
  - a. Looking back at the first 10 years of your life, which emotions, or themes most stand out to you, and why? Compare and contrast your predominant emotions with those Steve references.

- b. To the extent that earlier events in life help “shape” a person, do you believe that you can change that shape over time? Why or why not? If so, how?
2. On pages 1-2, the reader is introduced to Steve’s family. What do you notice? What do you wonder? What similarities and differences are there between how you and your family interact in relation to how Steve’s family is depicted here?
3. Nelson Mandela once said, “*No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background or his religion. People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.*”
  - a. On page 3, the reader learns how some teachers and parents helped the Nazis achieve their initial goals of isolating and dehumanizing Jewish people. Does this help excuse the actions of the boys on page 3, panel 5? Why or why not?
  - b. Do you agree with Mr. Mandela’s sentiment that people can learn to love, and that love comes more naturally than hate? Give examples to support your answer.
4. Imagine if the mother shown on page 3, panel 4 was teaching, or reading to her children how to love, not hate. Discuss with a partner, or write a script of what the mother *should* be saying instead. How would you portray the children?
5. The text box at the top of page 4, panel 1 reads: “*Even more Germans -- who didn’t care for Hitler and the Nazis -- said and did nothing. Because they weren’t Jewish, they felt that what was being said and done simply didn’t concern them.*”  
What, if anything, is troublesome about this fact? Why?
6. On page 5, we are introduced to Steve’s first “crush,” although many years later he could not remember her name.
  - a. What details do you recall about your first crush? Have you remained friends with your crush? Why or why not?
  - b. How do the authors’ inclusion of this fact contribute to the plot of the story?
7. Notice that this story does not include chapters. Imagine that the authors decided to insert chapters and titles, and chapter two would begin with the bottom two panels on page 5 and end at the bottom of page 8. Using a word or phrase on those pages, or an idea of your own, what would you title this chapter? Why?
8. Look at the opinion poll graphs following the events of *Kristallnacht* on November 9-10, 1938 on page 11, panel 4, “*What Should Be Done About German Jewish Refugees?*” How do you explain the seemingly conflicting data from these graphs? Does it surprise you? Why or why not? Do you believe such a discrepancy could occur today? Explain.

9. Consider the *Kindertransport (Child's Transport)*, briefly explained on page 11, panel 5 and Steve's separation from his mother on pages 16-17. What is one predominant theme for this sequence of events? What are two examples that support, or prove this theme and its importance to this part of the story?
10. What do you notice about pages 14 and 15? Why do you believe the authors and illustrator chose to portray this part of the story differently from the rest of this book? If these two pages had not been portrayed in this way, would anything have been lost, or gained? How are these two pages relevant, or important to Steve's overall story?
11. On page 15, panels 3 and 4, the reader sees two different types of memorials, or monuments. Why is it important to remember? What are potential consequences if we forget? Is there a place in your community where it would be important to memorialize a person, group of people, or event? For what purpose?
12. On page 17, Steve is truly alone for the first time in his life. His loneliness is compounded by Uncle Ludwig's failure to appear at the reception hall in London on page 19.
  - a. Have you ever been, or felt truly alone? Regardless, what feelings or thoughts did, or could run through your head when alone?
  - b. How does your knowledge of what it does, or must feel like to be alone contribute to your ability to appreciate Steve's experiences?
13. Haunted by guilt and his father's lessons, Steve confesses his crime to Gerhard, as depicted on pages 22-23.
  - a. Has guilt ever induced you to confess to some wrongdoing? If so, what did you hope to achieve, or gain? Did you learn your lesson, as Steve proclaimed he did?
  - b. What happens, or can happen if you ignore your feelings of guilt?
14. On pages 24-27, the reader learns that Steve, having already escaped great danger in Germany, must soon flee London as the war was swiftly approaching Britain. What character trait best describes Steve during these challenging, frightening times? Provide evidence to support your inference.
15. Consider the artwork on page 26.
  - a. Describe all the things you notice. What do you wonder?
  - b. Using this full page as evidence to support your response, explain what advantages there are to tell a story using images such as this one (a graphic novel) in comparison to a text-only story. Do such images contribute to your understanding, or appreciation of the story? How so?
16. Throughout this story, and again on page 27, panel 3, the reader is reminded that the adult Steve Adler is the story's narrator. What is the value of an older person sharing

his/her story of events that occurred many years ago, as opposed to: a) narration in the moment (as events happen), and b) third person narration? What is gained in either approach, in comparison to what might be lost?

17. How does your realization that the U.S. interned over 100,000 Japanese Americans during World War II on American soil, as indicated on page 31, contribute to your thoughts regarding how nations ought to treat people? Should a person's race, national origin or religion matter? Why, or why not?
18. Consider the adventures of Steve and Ralph, as shown on pages 32-33. How would you characterize their relationship? Has it changed in comparison to their time together in Germany? If so, how? If not, why not?
19. On the bottom of page 35, panel 3, Steve narrates that he felt both lucky and guilty because he and his family were able to leave Europe.
  - a. Why would Steve feel guilty? What does this say about his character?
  - b. Would you feel guilty if you were in Steve's shoes? Does the information in the second text box on page 37 solidify, or modify your answer? How so?
  - c. Have you ever felt guilty about a privilege or something you received and others didn't? Why, or why not?
20. On page 11, panel 1, and page 36, panel 1, the reader sees Steve's and Ralph's parents' insistence that they continue learning, even outside regular school. Regardless of whether your parents demand that you read and learn outside of school, if or when you become a parent do you believe that you will do as Steve's parents? Why, or why not?
21. On page 38, panel 1, Steve refers to "the teasing and bullying that so many refugees experience." Why do you think so many refugees experience this kind of treatment? What does such treatment of refugees and antisemitism have in common? What do you believe you can do to prevent such negative treatment?
22. Why do you think the authors include the information about Steve's accomplishments, wife, children and grandchildren on pages 39-40? Why is such information relevant to Steve's story?
23. Consider what we learn, first about Steve on page 41, and then about his daughter on page 42. If these two pages represent the final "chapter" of this story, what would you title it? Why?

<b>Potential Culminating Activities</b>
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- [Book-related culminating project options](#)
- [Request a Holocaust speaker to present to your students!](#) (including Barbara Adler West, Steve Adler's daughter!)
- [Schedule a field trip \(virtual or in person\)](#) and examine artifacts donated by Steve Adler and his family!
- [Have your students participate in our Writing, Art and Film Contest!](#)
- Two concentration camps are specifically referenced and are a part of this story: [Sachsenhausen](#) and [Theresienstadt \(Terezin\)](#). Have your students research and learn about one or both, sharing what they learn about the camp's location and function during the era of the Holocaust.